



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

6 September 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL TAYLOR

Attached is the memorandum for the President which you requested. Because of the urgency of the request, there has not been time to coordinate this memorandum within the intelligence community.

C.P. Cabell
C. P. CABELL
General, USAF
Acting Director

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

6 September 1961

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Current Status of Soviet and Satellite Military Forces and Indications of Military Intentions

1. Changes in Capabilities. * In recent weeks the USSR, and to a lesser extent the Satellites, have undertaken a series of measures aimed at several purposes: to display their military strength, to augment that strength, and to demonstrate their readiness to use it if necessary. These moves have included, in the USSR, the display of advanced aircraft and airborne missiles at Aviation Day, the announcement of a supplemental defense allocation of 3.1 billion rubles and of suspension of troop reductions, the subsequent announcement

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- * A summary of Soviet and Satellite forces in Europe facing NATO is at Annex. For a full discussion and detailed tables of Soviet and Satellite military strengths, see NIE 11-4-61, "Main Trends in Soviet Capabilities and Policies, 1961-1965," Annexes A and B, dated 24 August 1961. TOP SECRET.

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that an undisclosed number of men due for discharge will be retained, the invitation to Western attaches to attend an exercise featuring simulated tactical nuclear weapons, and the resumption of nuclear testing. In the SateMites, East Germany has launched a recruiting drive with a goal of 47,000 enlistments, Czechoslovakia is calling up some reservists and perhaps extending the terms of some personnel, and Poland has announced plans to follow the Czech lead.

2. Of these moves, only those relating to manpower will affect capabilities in the near future. (The increase in defense spending is for unknown purposes, and part of it might serve to raise current capabilities by such means as intensifying military training or establishing alert forces within the bomber fleet.) When the Soviet personnel reduction was suspended, the military establishment totaled approximately 3 million; the extension of service could raise this, by year's end, by a further quarter million (or, if all personnel are held in service, by three-quarters of a million). We believe that this move reflects primarily a desire to

improve the quality of Soviet forces by retaining trained personnel. In our view, it is almost certain that there has been no significant reinforcement of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe, or crash programs for re-equipment.

Nor do we have evidence that advanced weapons have been deployed westward in recent weeks.

3. The status of the Soviet ICBM program deserves special attention. The USSR is now engaged in the flight-testing of at least one type of second-generation ICBM system. Test firings began early this year, and thus far the firing program has been more intensive but much less successful than the earlier program to develop a first-generation ICBM. Still another vehicle, which may be for space flight or weapon delivery purposes, is also being test-fired from Tyuratam to Kamchatka this year. Based on the chronology and the degree of success to date, we are confident that neither of these new vehicles will be operational as ICBM weapon systems during the coming autumn and winter. You are aware of existing disagreements in the

intelligence community regarding current Soviet ICBM strength on launcher. These estimates cover the span from "a few" to 125 as of mid-1961 and are presently under urgent review. Although there has to date been no formal change in the estimates of Soviet ICBM strength contained in NIE 11-8-61, we now believe that our present estimate of 50-100 operational ICBM launchers as of mid-1961 is probably too high.

4. Our estimate was based on the belief that for several years the Soviets had engaged in a relatively steady though deliberately paced program to deploy first-generation ICBMs. On the basis of accumulating evidence of ICBM development and deployment, we now believe that the Soviet leaders recognized the serious disadvantages of their extremely cumbersome first-generation system and proceeded to the vigorous development of a more suitable second-generation system. We now believe that they deliberately elected to deploy only a small force of first-generation ICBMs in 1960-1961, even though they had the capability to

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101

deploy ICEMs in considerably greater quantity. During this same period, Soviet propaganda assiduously cultivated an image of great ICBM strength, relying heavily on Soviet space achievements to bolster these claims.

5. If our present view of the course of the Soviet ICBM program is correct, then the USSR has been and still is conducting its foreign policy from a position of less strength in intercontinental striking power than the Soviet leaders have sought to imply. Nevertheless, the present Soviet ICBM capabilities, along with those of bombers and submarines, pose a grave threat to US urban areas, but a more limited threat during the months immediately ahead to our nuclear striking forces,

6. On the other hand, we are more confident of our previous estimate of medium-range ballistic missiles. These weapons give the Soviets a formidable capability against our NATO allies and against our forces in Europe.

7. Readiness. Military ground and air activity in the USSR and Eastern Europe presently reflects a normal level of readiness. Naval out-of-area operations are somewhat higher than normal but this is not a greater divergence from normal than has occasionally occurred in the past. Commercial shipping is generally normal. The Soviet troops in East Germany which were deployed in connection with the border action of 13 August have returned to their locations. The two East German divisions which moved from the north to the Berlin area in July-August remain there, suggesting a permanent relocation which may involve some shift in areas of responsibility between the Soviet and East German forces. Intensified training by the East German Air Force suggests that it is being prepared for a greater role in the air defense of East Germany, including policing of the air corridors to Berlin.

8. The Soviet forces in Germany are at a generally high state of combat readiness. Activity is seasonally normal; the arrival of new conscripts has just begun, and

the exercise schedule of former years is being followed. Regimental level exercises are now taking place, and preparations for divisional exercises are underway. This training cycle normally reaches its peak in late October-early November, at which time the Soviet forces are in their highest state of readiness. In December, when units return to their garrisons following maneuvers and rotation of troops eastward for discharge normally occurs, this readiness falls off. This drop will be avoided this year if the troops in East Germany are among those whose terms are extended, and if they are held in East Germany.

9. Intentions. We have no indications in the present pattern of military activity of actual intent to initiate the use of force. In the future, we do not expect that military activity will provide conclusive evidence of intent to attack, except perhaps late in a crisis situation, since most indications will also be consistent with an intention to deter or to defend if attacked.

10. With respect to intentions, Khrushchev has stated that a Western attempt, after a separate peace treaty, to maintain access by force would be met with counterforce. We believe him. Despite his reiterations that such a conflict would "inevitably grow" into general nuclear war, we believe that the USSR would seek to keep such a conflict limited and non-nuclear, although it would almost certainly respond in kind to any raising of the stakes which threatened to result in a Soviet defeat.

11. Possible Future Developments. We anticipate that, in the coming months, the Soviets will take further actions designed to improve their general military posture, to intimidate the West, and to convince their opponents that they are determined to pursue their objectives in the face of high risks. On the ground in East Germany, they may increase their forces and deploy troops along the East-West German border or along Western access routes to Berlin. They may take measures to prepare their population for the

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possibility of war. To strengthen the image of Soviet military might, they may detonate a thermonuclear device of considerably higher yield than any they have yet tested. Other possibilities are the detonation of a variety of missile-delivered nuclear weapons -- perhaps in the Novaya Zemlya area or in the vicinity of the instrumentation ships which are still at sea in the Pacific. They may stage large-scale Warsaw Pact maneuvers to create an impression of the solidarity of that alliance.

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ANNEX

SOVIET AND SATELLITE FORCES IN EUROPE FACING NATO

1. Soviet ground strength in Eastern Europe is 26 combat ready divisions, backed up by 44 combat ready and 27 low strength divisions in Western USSR. Short-range ballistic missiles, capable of carrying either nuclear or conventional warheads, in mobile units, are probably assigned to these forces. The Satellite armies have a total of 59 divisions of varying degrees of effectiveness and reliability. Soviet and Satellite divisions by type are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

2. Soviet forces in East Germany represent a powerful armored force of about 350, 000 men, with 10 tank and 10 motorized rifle divisions, well over 5, 000 tanks, and supporting artillery and other units. The USSR has the back-up capability for reinforcement and continuing resupply so long as the logistical lines from the USSR are intact. These forces are equipped with dual-capable weapons and carriers. There is some evidence that nuclear warheads are presently stocked in East Germany for Soviet ground forces, although

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storage sites have not been identified. The Soviets could readily provide tactical nuclear weapons to their forces in Eastern Europe.

3. Soviet Tactical Aviation now has about 175 jet light bombers and 900 fighters in Eastern Europe. The Satellites together have about 125 light bombers and about 2,100 fighters intended primarily for air defense. In the European USSR, there are in Tactical Aviation an additional 75 medium bombers, 325 light bombers, and about 1,000 fighters.

4. The Soviet Navy has some 130 modern long-range submarines (including 21 missile launching ships), 3 cruisers, and about 50 destroyers and destroyer escorts in the Northern Fleet capable of engagement in the North Atlantic, in addition to units in the Baltic and Black Seas. There are about 250 naval medium bombers (BADGERS), the bulk of them equipped with air-to-surface missiles, with these European fleets.

5. Some of the 975 medium bombers of Long Range Aviation and medium and intermediate range missiles of the

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Rocket Forces are also available to support theater campaigns in Europe. We estimate that the USSR now has a force of medium range (700 and 1,100 n.m.) missiles which approaches 250-300 operational launchers, the majority of which are deployed within range of West European targets.

TABLE 1
SOVIET LINE DIVISIONS FACING NATO

AREA	RIFLE	MOTORIZED RIFLE/ MECHANIZED		TANK	AIRBORNE	TOTAL
		TANK	AIRBORNE			
Eastern Europe						
Combat Ready	0	12		14	0	26
Low Strength	0	0		0	0	0
	0	12		14	0	26
Western USSR						
Combat Ready	2	29		8	5	44
Low Strength	7	19		1	0	27
	9	48		9	5	71
TOTAL						
Combat Ready	2	41		22	5	70
Low Strength	7	19		1	0	27
	9	60		23	5	97

TABLE 2
SATELLITE LINE DIVISIONS

COUNTRY	RIFLE	MOTORIZED RIFLE/ MECHANIZED	TANK	AIRBORNE	TOTAL
Bulgaria	6	0	1	0	7
Czechoslovakia	0	12	2	0	14
East Germany	0	4	2	0	6
Hungary	0	5	0	0	5
Poland	0	9	4	1	14
Rumania	11	1	1	0	13
TOTAL	17	31	10	1	59